CONFERENCE OF THE EIGHTEEN-NATION COMMITTEE ON DISARMAMENT

ENDC/227
16 July 1968
ENGLISH
Original: RUSSIAN

MEMORANDUM BY THE GOVERNMENT OF THE USSR ON SOME URGENT MEASURES FOR STOPPING THE ARMS RACE AND FOR DISARMAMENT

Since the very first days of its existence, the Soviet State has based its foreign policy on the struggle against the imperialist policy of aggression and war, the struggle to secure peace among the nations. Following the course mapped out by V.I. Lenin, the Soviet Government has perseveringly and consistently come out in favour of implementing a broad programme of measures for stopping the arms race and for disarmament, in favour of translating into reality a plan of general and complete disarmament.

The active efforts of socialist countries, and of all peace-loving States, have resulted in a series of practical steps aimed at limiting the scope of the nuclear arms race and achieving disarmament. The Moscow Treaty banning nuclear-weapon tests in the atmosphere, in outer space and under water was followed by the Treaty on the Principles Governing the Activities of States in Outer Space, which blocked the way to outer space for nuclear weapons. Now drafted and ready for signature is the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, which is of great importance for strengthening peace and creating favourable conditions for further efforts to stop the arms race and to implement effective measures for banning and destroying nuclear weapons.

The interests of safeguarding peace demand further steps to restrict the arms race and to achieve disarmament. This is the more important since, as a result of the intensified activities of aggressive circles, international tension has increased, the aggressive war waged by the United States in Viet-nam is growing in scope and the occupation by Israel of the territories, seized by force, of a number of Arab States continues.

After the conclusion of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, the Soviet Government proposes that agreement should be reached to implement in the very near future the following urgent measures aimed at stopping the nuclear arms race and achieving disarmament.

1. Prohibition of the use of nuclear weapons

Since the emergence of nuclear weapons, the Soviet Union has consistently advocated the prohibition and complete destruction of these weapons of mass annihilation. The conclusion of an international agreement banning the use of nuclear weapons would be an important step towards the solution of this problem and towards the removal of the threat

of nuclear war. Such an agreement would be a serious deterrent to all those who might wish to resort to nuclear weapons. By allaying the apprehensions of some States as to the intentions of others regarding the use of nuclear weapons, such an agreement would be conducive to the establishment of a healthy international atmosphere.

To facilitate a speedy solution of this problem, the Government of the USSR proposed for the consideration of the United Nations General Assembly at its twenty-second session a draft convention on the prohibition of the use of nuclear weapons. A significant majority of the delegations at the Assembly concurred with the idea of the need for such an international convention. The Assembly called upon all States to examine the draft convention on the prohibition of the use of nuclear weapons proposed by the Soviet Union as well as such other proposals as might be made on this question, and to conduct negotiations concerning the conclusion of an appropriate convention either through the convening of an international conference, or in the Eighteen-Nation Committee on Disarmament, or directly between States.

With a view to obtaining a practical solution of the question of the prohibition of the use of nuclear weapons, the Soviet Government proposes that the Eighteen-Nation Committee on Disarmament discuss as a matter of high priority the draft convention on the prohibition of the use of such weapons and exchange opinions on the convening of an international conference to sign an appropriate convention.

2. Measures for stopping the manufacture of nuclear weapons and for reducing and destroying stockpiles

Desiring to deliver mankind from the danger of nuclear war, the Soviet Government proposes that all nuclear Powers should forthwith enter into negotiations on stopping the manufacture of nuclear weapons, and on the reduction of stockpiles, to be followed by the complete prohibition and destruction of nuclear weapons under appropriate international control. The Soviet Government declares its readiness to start such negotiations with all other nuclear Powers at any time. In so doing, the Soviet Government considers that in the course of such negotiations agreement may be achieved both on the whole package of measures leading to the destruction of nuclear weapons and on some of the measures designed to achieve that aim.

3. Limitation and subsequent reduction of means of delivery of strategic weapons

The Soviet Government proposes that agreement should be reached on definite steps for the limitation and subsequent reduction of strategic means of delivery of nuclear weapons. The Soviet Government considers that the destruction of the whole arsenal of

strategic means of delivery, or at any rate the reduction of that arsenal to an absolute minimum, leaving -- and that only temporarily -- no more than a strictly limited quantity of such means of delivery, would be a measure conducive to the removal of the threat of nuclear war.

The Soviet Government declares its readiness to undertake an exchange of views with the States concerned on the mutual limitation and subsequent reduction of strategic means of delivery of nuclear weapons.

4. Prohibition of flights beyond national borders of bombers carrying nuclear weapons. Limitation of navigation zones for rocket-carrying submarines

The Soviet Government has repeatedly drawn the attention of the Governments of other States and of world public opinion to the danger inherent in the flights of bombers with nuclear weapons on board beyond national borders. The increased number of accidents involving United States bombers with nuclear weapons on board outside the territory of the United States is a matter of legitimate concern to various countries. There is no guarantee that the next accident to a bomber armed with nuclear bombs will not result in a nuclear explosion, with all the ensuing consequences. In the present state of tension, such a nuclear explosion may lead to a whole series of grave events, to a conflict dangerous for all mankind. From the military point of view, such flights of bombers, given the existence of rockets carrying nuclear warheads, are devoid of sense. They can have but one aim -- to increase international tension, regardless of the consequences of such a dangerous practice.

The Soviet Government proposes that flights beyond national borders of bombers with nuclear weapons on board should be banned without delay.

In order to reduce the risk of nuclear war, the Soviet Government also proposes that agreement should be reached to the effect that patrolling by submarines carrying nuclear missiles should be prohibited in areas from which the missiles can reach the frontiers of the contracting parties.

5. Ban on underground nuclear-weapon tests

The Soviet Union has been and continues to be a steadfast advocate of the prohibition of all nuclear-weapon tests, believing that the banning of all tests will promote the consolidation of peace and the slackening of the arms race. The Soviet Government is prepared to reach agreement without delay on the banning of underground nuclear-weapon tests on the basis of the use of national means of detection to control observance of the ban.

6. Prohibition of the use of chemical and bacteriological weapons

The Soviet Government has on several occasions drawn the attention of States to the threat posed for mankind by the use of chemical and bacteriological weapons. Voicing the general concern of nations over such a threat, the United Nations General Assembly at its twenty-first session adopted a resolution calling for strict observance by all States of the principles of the Geneva Protocol of 1925 for the prohibition of the use of chemical and bacteriological methods of warfare, condemning all actions contrary to that objective and inviting all States to accede to the Geneva Protocol.

By some countries, however, chief among them the United States of America, this important decision of the General Assembly is not being carried out. What is more, the United States is using chemical weapons in its aggressive war in Viet-nam. The Soviet Government therefore proposes that the Eighteen-Nation Committee should consider ways and means of securing the observance by all States of the Geneva Protocol for the prohibition of the use of chemical and bacteriological methods of warfare.

7. Elimination of foreign military bases

Foreign military bases in the territories of other States are a serious danger to peace. Such bases are a source of military conflicts and a threat to the freedom and independence of peoples. This is convincingly proved by the continuing aggressive war of the United States in Viet-nam and by the tension and conflicts in other parts of the world where foreign bases are situated.

The Soviet Government proposes that, in accordance with the mandate given by the United Nations General Assembly at its twenty-first session, the Eighteen-Nation Committee on Disarmament should give urgent consideration to the question of the elimination of foreign military bases.

8. Measures for regional disarmament

The Soviet Government is in favour of establishing denuclearized zones in various parts of the world. It is of the opinion that the creation of such zones should effectively limit the area of distribution of nuclear weapons and be fully consistent with the objective of preventing their direct or indirect proliferation.

The Soviet Government considers that not only groups of States embracing whole continents or large geographical areas but also more limited groups of States and even individual countries may assume obligations to establish denuclearized zones.

The Soviet Government also supports proposals concerning the implementation of measures for regional disarmament and for the reduction of armaments in various parts of the world, including the Middle East. The question of such measures to restrict the arms race in the Middle East could, of course, be considered only subject to the elimination of the consequences of the Israel aggression against Arab countries and, above all, subject to the complete withdrawal of Israel troops from the territories of Arab countries occupied by them.

9. Peaceful uses of the sea-bed and ocean floor

The interests of the restriction of the arms race are also served by the limitation of the military uses of the environments in which man lives and works and by the prevention of the extension of such uses to new spheres of human activity. The Soviet Government has consistently striven and is still striving towards the achievement of these goals, and it is gratified to note that important practical steps in this direction are to be found in the relevant limitations embodied in the Antarctic Treaty and in the Treaty on the Principles Governing the Activities of States in the Exploration and Use of Outer Space, including the Moon and Other Celestial Bodies.

The progress of research and the prospects for the development of the sea-bed and the ocean floor make it possible to raise the question of giving timely expression in appropriate form, to a regime such as would ensure the utilization of the sea-bed beyond the limits of the present territorial waters solely for peaceful purposes. That would, in particular, involve the prohibition of the establishment of fixed military installations on the sea-bed, as well as other activities of a military nature. The Soviet Government proposes that the Eighteen-Nation Committee should start negotiations on the question of the utilization exclusively for peaceful purposes of the sea-bed beyond the limits of the present territorial waters.

* *
*

In proposing the above measures, the Soviet Government draws attention to the need for making every effort to achieve concrete results in solving the problem of general and complete disarmament. The Soviet Government deems it necessary to give a new impetus to the negotiations on this question in the Eighteen-Nation Committee on Disarmament. At the same time it is in favour of the implementation of the United Nations General Assembly's decision concerning the holding of a world disarmament conference, and it is

confident that the convening of such a conference will contribute to the solution of this most important problem confronting mankind.

Guided by its position of principle in questions concerning the struggle for peace, the Soviet Union, in co-operation with the socialist countries and with all peace-loving States, will work for removing the threat of nuclear war, for curbing the forces of aggression and for carrying out a broad programme of disarmament. The Soviet Government calls upon all States to do all that is necessary to achieve agreement on urgent measures for stopping the arms race, and on disarmament.